



Dr. Victor Gomoiu (1882-1960), an outstanding romanian medical personality and historian of medicine

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Abstract

Throughout his lifetime, Dr. Victor Gomoiu developed an overwhelming activity covering numerous fields. He was an excellent and creative surgeon, a researcher in the domain of medicine, and a particularly brilliant historian of medicine. Gomoiu had civic initiatives, and got involved in social-medical problems and philanthropic projects. He also took a stand on current political issues, always being on the right side of the events. He founded the Romanian Society for the History of Medicine (RSHM) in 1929, and immediately affiliated it to the International Society for the History of Medicine (ISHM). In 1932 he organised the IX-th ISHM Congress in Bucharest. As a consequence of his success, he was elected ISHM vicepresident in 1933, and in 1936 he became its president. At the end of his successful mandate and of WW II, Gomoiu was unanimously appointed ISHM honorary president for the rest of his life. A patriot, and an internationally reputed personality, Gomoiu refused to recognise the new political order instaurated in Romania after 1945. He was imprisoned, then released and rehabilitated. For him it was too late and totally unfair. RSHM, on its 90th anniversary, and ISHM, on its centenary, remember him, his endeavour, efficiency and example.

Keywords: Gomoiu, surgery, history of medicine, International Society for the History of Medicine

I. Education and early promising carrier.

Dr. Victor Gomoiu was born on April 18th, 1882, in Vânu Mare commune (Mehedinți County), in the family of Ana (ex Mihăileanu) and Gheorghe Gomoiu, a modest orthodox priest. After primary studies at Vânu Mare, he continued school at the "Traian" College in Turnu-Severin. Between 1899-1900, he also taught Greek and Latin languages, along with Natural Sciences at the Girls' College of the same city. Gomoiu continued by being admitted as a medical student at the University of Bucharest, graduating brilliantly from the Faculty of Medicine in 1905. (Fig.1)

At the Faculty he developed a particularly rich activity: he was an extern (1902-1904) of general surgery in Thoma Ionescu's clinic, then an intern (1905-1909): first of ophthalmology in Nicolae Manolescu's clinic, then in surgery in Constantin Dimitrescu Severeanu's clinic and in Thoma Ionescu's service once more, and then in internal medicine in George I. Stoicescu's clinic, all at the Colțea Hospital. In 1906, in the Surgical Clinic I he performed the first total keratoplasty, but he undertook an epidemiological investigation, as well: "Eye diseases in the rural population" (1906). Between 1906-1908, he was a Law student, as well. He kept on publishing interesting papers, proving originality and updated approaches, including those concerning plastic surgery: "A new hemostatic:

chloroiodoform" (1907); "A new operating procedure for ectropion" (1908); "A new enteroclyser" (1908); "A new procedure for creating the bladder" (1908); "The multiple flap method in transplant dermatoplasty" (1908) etc.

In 1909, Gomoiu defended his doctoral thesis in medicine and surgery, dealing with the "Anaplastics of the face and head", that was appreciated "cum laude" and was awarded the Golden Medal for the best paper. The same year he was elected member of the *Circle for Genito - Urinary Studies*, of the *Anatomical Society* and of the *Medical Sciences Society*, then of the *Society of Neurology and Psychiatry*, and the *Society for the Prophylaxis of Tuberculosis*.

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In 1910, Gomoiu equally received the "Hillel Prize" of the Bucharest University for his study on "The physiological role of cholesterine in the animal organism". For being admitted as a member of the Society of Surgery of Bucharest Gomoiu submitted a memoir on the "Inguinal

route in the treatment of diseases of the inguino-scrotal region (of the bursa content)" (1910). In 1912, he became a docent in surgery of the Bucharest University, with a thesis on "The Surgical treatment of genital tuberculosis in man".



Fig.1. Victor Gomoiu
Ephor: 1920-1920

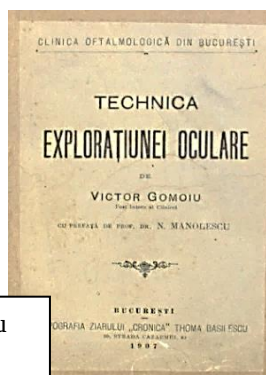


Fig.2. Victor Gomoiu.
[The technique of ocular
exploration], 1907.

II. Activity landmarks. All his life, dr. Victor Gomoiu had a prodigious activity irradiating in various fields. He proved to be an excellent surgeon, a good doctor in general, a researcher in the domain of surgery and physiology, in a moment when physiological and conservative surgery was insistently promoted. Moreover, in Bucharest it was the epoch of both Nicolae Paulescu and Daniel Danielopolu, the latter being equally interested in the sympathetic nervous system, as Thoma Ionescu and Victor Gomoiu himself were. At the same time, in Gomoiu's position of a surgeon, hence trained anatomist, anthropology interested him, too. So he wrote two studies bearing on Romanian craniology, he defined as "documents d'attente" [pending documents] [1]. (Fig.3) In 1914, he published a study of 24 craniums, as an article, then as a booklet, and in 1915, the results of his "Researches on the cranial perimeter" appeared.

Concurrently, Gomoiu had civic initiatives and got seriously involved in social-medical problems and philanthropic issues. Beside his intense clinical duties, he used to be either a full or a substitute university professor of surgery. Another defining option was his passion for and proficiency in the history of medicine, a field that eventually rendered him world-famous. Among other topics, his many public conferences, scientific communications or publications dealt with history of medicine; medicine and art; medical deontology; Hippocrates and the Hippocratic Corpus; life in relation to the evolution of science and civilisation; biological progress or regression; the comparative history of Romanian medicine; the first scientific medical associations in Romania; the first students of Carol Davila's School of Medicine; medical

folklore in Romanian popular poetry. He always tried to distinguish between closely related and often confused terms: medical folklore, popular medicine, domestic medicine. Once created, the "Mehedinți House of Light" [Casa Lumii din Mehedinți] cultural foundation was a place where Gomoiu delivered a whole cycle of interesting lectures. He did the same at Vălenii de Munte, at Nicolae Iorga's well known Summer School, and in Popular Athenaeums, specific to interwar Romania. In 1927 Gomoiu wrote on the "Priests in the Service of Medical Care and Social Medicine" [Preoțimea în slujba operelor de ocrotire și medicină socială] and in 1929 he received the "Reward of work for the Church" [Răsplata muncii pentru Biserică] Medal, first class. He continued by enlarging this type of research and in 1940 he published a monograph on "Church and Medicine" [Biserica și medicina], where he claimed that in contemporary societies priests can still be "doctors of the soul".

Administrative tasks completed his overwhelming professional involvement. On March 1st, 1924, Gomoiu was appointed member of the Council of the Romanian Association for the Society of Nations. Gomoiu collaborated with his colleague, professor Mitică Popescu-Buzeu and supported the establishment of the Balkan Medical Union in Bucharest that occurred on October 24th, 1932. Even though not a political actor, Gomoiu took a stand on all current political issues. But the one against the communist regime instaurated in Romania after 1948 cost him dear.

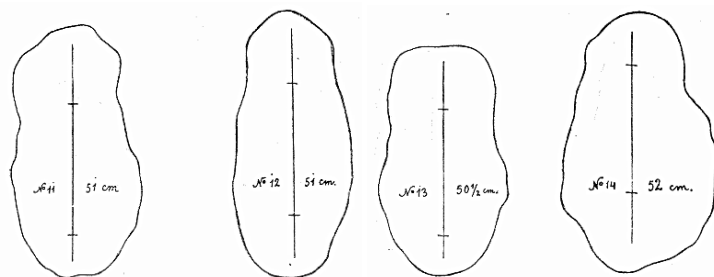


Fig.3. Craniometric studies
by dr. Gomoiu

III. Professor of surgery. Over the years, dr. Gomoiu went through all the stages of professional recognition and was appointed head surgeon. He worked in several outstanding hospitals in Bucharest, such as Colțea, Philanthropy, and Brancovan [Brâncovenesc] ones. For several years, he was in charge of didactic activities, in both the First and Second Surgical Clinics. In 1905 Gomoiu was a university preparer, and much later, in 1912, he was a substitute professor of Minor Surgery, except for the periods of war: 1912-1913 and 1916-1918. Between 1918-1920, he taught at the Chairs of Surgery and Topographic Anatomy, and of Surgical Pathology. In 1920-1921 he was full professor at the Chair of External Pathology, Bandages and Fracture Apparatuses. During this period he conducted 18 theses for the doctorate in medicine and surgery, and was a member of the jury for the examination of 24 similar theses. He loved teaching and performing surgery in a simple, clear and ethical way. In 1921, he refused to be appointed full professor of surgery without a real contest, based only on a simple, even though valuable, candidate file. [2].

A dedicated specialist, Gomoiu published about 600 scientific papers, revealing his deep knowledge of surgery, complex medical thinking and creative experience. For several years, by his notable activity he almost supported alone the communication sessions of the Society of Surgery, whereas by his surgical qualities he undoubtedly trained gifted disciples, and even generated his own school. He officially retired in 1942, but his tormented destiny went on. In 1944 dr. Gomoiu got the "Dr. Zernoveanu" prize of the Academy of Sciences of Romania for his paper "New Teachings in Surgery"; in 1945 the Romanian Athenaeum University conferred on him the "Trandafir Djuvara" prize for his substantial conferences – specifically the lecture on "The Beginnings of our Medicine". It happened the same year when the "Star of Romania" [*Steaua României*] Order with swords and ribbon rewarded his activity.

IV. A military surgeon in four wars.

Gomoiu's life span four wars and two revolutions. In 1909 he started his military service as a physician's aid [*medic ajutor*] in the surgical section of the "Queen Elisabeth" Central Military Hospital in Bucharest. In October 1912, during the First Balkan War, he was a leading surgeon of a Romanian ambulance sent to Turkey. One month later, with the agreement of the Turkish "Red Crescent" Society, he organized a field hospital at Dede Agath. The following year he got involved in the Second Balkan War and the Bulgaria Campaign, fighting against

cholera epidemic, too. In 1913, he received for his merits the Romanian Silver Medal of the "Red Cross", the "Country's Impetus" [*Avântul Țării*] Medal and the "Bravery and Faith" [*Bărbăție și credință*] Medal, first class, whereas the Sultan offered him the "Red Crescent" Medal and the dignity of *Commander of the Order of the Medjidie*.

During World War I – 1916-1918, Gomoiu, an excellent surgeon, had numerous life saving initiatives. He was lieutenant and then captain doctor and worked in several hospitals from Focșani to Iași on the Romanian front line in Moldavia. He suffered himself from exanthematic typhus or, according to dr. Vasile Bianu, recurrent fever, and severely criticised the eccentric worldly habits of the "elites" [2]. His former Master, professor Thoma Ionescu, who was in Iași as a refugee, heard about Gomoiu's disease and presumed death. Surprisingly, he was quite impressed with it. When he learned that Gomoiu was alive and healed from his illness, Ionescu immediately changed the content of the intended "Obituary" into a short article titled "The Martyrs" and published it in the local newspaper "The Opinion" [*Opinia*]. [2].

For his dedicated activity Gomoiu was decorated with the "Crown of Romania" Order with swords [*Coroana României* cu spade], grade of Knight, the "Star of Romania" Order with swords [*Steaua României* cu spade], grade of Knight, the "Victory" Medal, and in 1918, with the "Commemorative Cross of the 1916–1918 War" Medal. He received the "Crown of Romania" Order in grade of Commander, too. In 1918-1919, Gomoiu was a chief physician of the flying surgical team to the Military Hospital in Oradea, assisting the wounded and diseased soldiers who kept on combating the enemy in the Tisza region. Consequently, in 1919 he was awarded the "Queen Mary Cross" Order, second class. In 1922, he received the French Legion of Honour [*Légion d'Honneur*] Medal, grade of Knight, for having taken care and saved the lives of many French soldiers who fought in Moldavia. As a doctor who got directly acquainted with the French Medical Mission's support during WWI, and as a medical historian, in 1918, Gomoiu edited a study paying a "Tribute to France and French doctors" [*Hommage à la France et aux médecins français*]. In the meantime, in 1917, during the Great War, he witnessed the consequences of the *Russian Revolution*, that deeply disturbed the resistance force of the Romanian Army on the Eastern Moldavian front, affecting the civilian population, as well.

In 1923 Gomoiu was elected vice-president of the Reserve Officers Union - Ilfov section, in 1934, general president of the Reserve and Retirement Officers Union in Romania, in 1937 *ad vitam* president of the Reserve Officers Union in Romania, and editor of the *Bulletin of the Reserve Officers Union* in Romania. In 1936, Gomoiu participated in the International Congress of Military Medicine, as member of its Honorary Committee. Many of his papers and conferences focused indeed on military surgery topics.

During WWII, in 1941-1945, even though already more than 58 years of age, Gomoiu was once again on the front line. He was lieutenant-colonel doctor and director of the Hospital no. 309 in the Zone of Interior (*Bariera Vergului Hospital*) in Bucharest. In 1943 he became a member of the Society of Military Writers.

King Mihai I, probably advised by his mother, Princess Elena -as Gomoiu surmised-, conferred on him the "Star of Romania" Order with swords and "Military Virtue" ribbon in grade of the "Great Cross", I-st class.

Later, after 1945, Gomoiu, who devotedly served his country all his life, had to endure the hard consequences of the *communist Revolution* brought over to Romania by the Soviets, that suddenly transformed this so compassionate surgeon - towards his patients and disadvantaged persons- into an "exploiter of the people".

V. A skilled and innovative surgeon.

Paradoxically, Gomoiu's first encounter with surgery was a very unpleasant and disappointing one, since he fainted looking at the serious injuries of a patient's hand. Yet during his formation years, he specialised in general surgery, but equally in ophthalmology and urology. In 1907 he published a monograph on "The technique of ocular exploration" (328 pages) (Fig.2) that professor Nicolae Manolescu prefaced, and performed a total corneal replacement. In 1908, dr. Gomoiu already improved sigmoido-cystoplasty technique by ureter implants, and in 1909 presented his doctoral thesis focused on the "Anaplastics of the face and head". It was not only a remarkable synthesis of classic data concerning anaplasty, but it included three original methods for the functional reconstruction of the face and head belonging to the very young dr. Gomoiu himself. Soon after, in 1912, he earned his doctor

degree with a dissertation on "The Surgical treatment of genital tuberculosis in man".

Dr. Andrei Trosco, future associate professor of surgery and orthopedics in Iași, a former intern, collaborator and friend of Gomoiu, appreciated this paper, too. Gomoiu and Trosco worked together mostly at the Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Techirghiol in 1911, when Gomoiu was its director and tried both to operate and analyse the therapeutic muds. In Bucharest, as a skilled surgeon, Gomoiu operated with the celebrated professor Thoma Ionescu (Ionescu), practising general surgery, but particularly approaching the surgery of the sympathetic nervous system. In 1916, he supposedly suggested to his Master, Thoma Ionescu, an original intervention on the cervico-thoracic sympathetic structures - ablation of stellate ganglion -, for treating angina pectoris: the "Thoma Ionescu-Gomoiu operation". It was the first attempted surgical treatment for coronary diseases. Even though in 1916 this technique was reported in the Romanian "Journal of Surgery" as belonging to both Thoma Ionescu and Victor Gomoiu, after WWI professor Ionescu published the results in France - in *La Presse Médicale* - and again in Bucharest without mentioning Gomoiu's name anymore. Gomoiu very strongly reacted to this inequity and, despite the fact that his future career fundamentally depended on his Master, the relation with Thoma Ionescu irremediably deteriorated.[2,3] Nevertheless, the great French specialist in sympathetic system and pain surgery, René Leriche, from the University of Strasbourg by then, wrote to Gomoiu, expressing his appreciation for his contribution. Leriche defended Gomoiu in the "Lyon Chirurgical" journal. He had an excellent opinion about this Romanian surgeon's medical knowledge, surgical competence and abilities, as he outlined in his personal letters to Gomoiu as well.[4,5].

Solarectomy – resection of the abdominal sympathetic elements - first performed in 1914, and removal of plexiform or semilunar ganglia were other original methods due to Gomoiu. After having synthesized some "Considerations on the abdominal sympathetic system" in 1915, in 1916 he authored another paper on "Solarectomy in gastric tabetic crises". Gomoiu's solarectomy method was mentioned in Testut-Jacob's [Treatise on topographic anatomy with medico-surgical applications].

Gomoiu also suggested and performed bilateral sacral sympathectomy for suppressing pelvic pain (1919). Two operatory procedures were given his name: *Gomoiu-Eden* method for the myoplastic treatment of facial paralysis, and *Gomoiu-Phocas* method for the surgical management of inguinal-scrotal hernia. It was the French doctor J. P. Tourneux who mentioned the advantages of this latter technique and named it *Gomoiu-Phocas*, because the Romanian and the Greek surgeons described and practised it almost at the same time. Anyway, Gomoiu did it previously, in 1909, but published his data only in Romanian journals, so they could not have possibly influenced Phocas [6]. As to myoplasty, a muscle fascicle was used in order to correct facial statics. Improved by professor Ion Jianu, Gomoiu's method was described in Krause's treatise of head surgery. Another contribution by Gomoiu bore on varicocele treatment, whose pathogenesis was explained as caused by hernia compression. Gomoiu's approach was reproduced by Auguste Le Dentu and Pierre Delbet in their "Treatise of clinical and operative surgery".(5) In his book entitled "My Surgery" [*Chirurgia mea*], Victor Gomoiu summed up his whole experience as a doctor, including thinking, teaching, practising and observing moral principles, everything presented and argued against a medical-historical background [7]. The prestige of surgery requires, according to Gomoiu, not to make futile attempts and it orders not to operate if not necessary. Otherwise surgeons are sometimes obliged to intervene in already lost cases, because the law imposes it, irrespective of the prognosis, or just for getting trained or for the sake of making money. The "poetry" of medicine, its biological uncertainty, "unforeseen" evolution and interindividual variability should never be exploited against the diseased and suffering persons. Similarly to the motto of the French Academy of Surgery, Gomoiu really believed that the medical practitioner should observe "Truth in science, morality in art" (*Vérité dans la science, moralité dans l'art*).

VI. Administrative activities and managerial qualities. Through his lifetime, Gomoiu proved to be an excellent organiser and manager of both social and medico-sanitary activities. In 1906 he was elected vice-president of the Society of Medical Students in Bucharest and member of the Editorial Board of "The Hospital" review ["Spitalul"]. The same year -1906- he collaborated with two Transylvanians -the famous poet George Coșbuc and Gheorghe Dumitrescu-Bumbești, father of Romanian popular banks-, and established the "Poporanist Circle" and the "Villager's Get-together" journal [*Șezătoarea săteanului*] at Bumbești-Jiu (Gorj County). Crowning his activity, in 1906 he was awarded the "Carol I" Jubilee Medal, that celebrated four decennia of this King's rule. In 1907 Gomoiu was elected president of the Society of Law Students, and concurrently, president of the Society of Medical Students of Bucharest. In 1908 he became a honorary member and president of the Medical Students' Society and president of the Students' National Congress. Between 1909-1911, Gomoiu fulfilled the task of librarian of

the Faculty of Medicine – in the Institute of Topographic Anatomy and Operatory Surgery, created by Thoma Ionescu. In 1914, he was elected general secretary of the Romanian Society of Surgery. In March 1911 Victor Gomoiu was appointed director of the "Sanatorium for combating tuberculosis in children" at Techirghiol. After having substantially improved medical care and life quality of the sick there, as an extremely proud and suspicious character, he resigned with dignity several months later, due to minor reproaches he was addressed by professor Gheorghe Proca and his wife, who, inspecting the institution, identified small hygiene troubles, like the presence of flies. Gomoiu maintained his resignation because, as he put it: "unable to catch the flies". In the meantime, impressed by the 1911 50th anniversary jubilee of the University of Iași, he envisaged to write a history of it.

Central medical administration. Dr. Gomoiu showed his administrative abilities as head of the Brancovenesc hospital surgical service. In 1920, he was appointed member of the *Board of Civil Hospitals* [*Eforia Spitalelor Civile*] of Bucharest and thus became an "ephor". What Gomoiu found was a real disaster: the Central Administration of Hospitals had in its coffers the ridiculous sum of 10 cents. He rapidly started revolutionary changes, succeeding in implementing an economic recovery strategy. He dreamed of Bucharest hospitals as of a "Medical University City". Within the structure of the *Board of Civil Hospitals*, Gomoiu also reestablished in 1921 a *School for Nurses* at the Colțea Hospital, but practice was equally performed at Colentina and Philanthropy Hospitals. He named it "Queen Maria" *School for Nurses*, reminding the role of the Sovereign in the First World War. Queen Maria attended the opening ceremony. In his capacity as an ephor, Gomoiu organized the first summer camps for children, in the mountains and at sea, initiated teaching of puericulture in Romania, created a Puericulture Service, and a special IOW [IOV] Service – i.e., a Service for Invalids, Orphans and Widows [4]. In 1921, a mixed outbreak of scarlet fever and diphtheria occurred; one of the student nurses fell ill and died, treating the diseased. Very impressed with the young girl's sacrifice, Gomoiu put on her chest the "Sanitary Merit" Medal, third class, and asked the Health Ministry to accept this recognition of her merit. Since this did not happen, in 1922 Gomoiu resigned from his position.

Being an efficient and extremely honest manager, in 1928 dr. Gomoiu was appointed professor Iuliu Moldovan's technical counselor, and in 1930, general secretary in the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. In 1940 he was elected not only president of the Medical College in Bucharest, but equally Minister of Health and Social Protection. Short lived positions for Gomoiu! Each time he was looked at as a straight, uncomfortable or strange person, capable of telling the truth even brutally – a "fool" who easily resigned for deontological or moral reasons.

However, pure science was always the right choice for him. Three years later, in 1943, he became vice-president of the Academy of Sciences of Romania.

Reading Gomoiu's *Memories*, one could be surprised to discover the unseen dark or gray face of mythical medical and other scientific or political personalities, revealing the constitutional corruption that governed the Romanian society in the "reference" interwar period. On the one hand, strong scientific profiles, on the other, human weakness emerged in such cases as, for instance, George Marinescu, Ion Vintilescu, Nicolae Iorga, Francisc Rainer, Ernest Juvara, or, from Iași, Gheorghe Tudoranu and Vasile Mârza [8, 9].

VII. Philanthropy and social medicine. Dr.

Victor Gomoiu was a very good hearted person, a "lay apostle", as they called him, animated by fundamental humanitarian and

Christian ideals. In 1920 he carried out some very meritorious actions, setting up, for instance, a summer camp for children in need, since he was particularly impressed by their pain and distress. As a matter of fact, Gomoiu was extremely sensitive to children in general and children's suffering, in particular, also because, during WWI, he had lost his first wife, Maria, and Victoria and Daniela – two of the three little daughters he had from this marriage [9].



Fig.4. a. Dr. Gomoiu; b. the land where the Establishments were built; c. "HRH Princess Elena" Hospital

In parallel, in 1924 he was appointed protector of the primary school of the Vânu-Mare commune (Mehedinți County). But more than that, Gomoiu was the benefactor of the *The Vergului Barrier Establishments for Medical and Social Assistance*. The same year -1924 - he was empowered as trustee of the Charities by Her Royal Highness Princess Elena - Carol II's wife. In 1925, Victor Gomoiu decided to lay the basis of a medical, social and cultural center at the periphery of Bucharest, in a totally disadvantaged area - the *Vergului Barrier (Bariera Vergului)* neighbourhood. It was a dirty, muddy zone, almost outside the town, a land of the disinherited "poor and ignorant" people. (Fig.4)

In 1927 he became general director of this Royal Foundation and editor of the Foundation's Annals [*Analele Așezămintelor Altei Sale Regale Principesa Elena*], that appeared until 1948.

The Vergului Barrier Hospital that Gomoiu erected from nothing included more sections and specialties: internal medicine, surgery, gynecology, obstetrics and maternity (*labour ward*), pediatrics, stomatology, laboratories and a pharmacy. "Her Royal Highness Princess Elena Establishments" also organised camps for the poor children in the mountains and at sea, free of any charge. Children from all over Greater Romania could benefit from these opportunities. In 1927, when the Establishments were officially inaugurated, the Hospital had 34 rooms. There was a polyclinic service on the ground floor with ten medical offices, two laboratories, a multifunctional hall. On the first floor there was the hospital, incorporating the medical and surgical sections, finally equipped with 60 beds. Led by Gomoiu, the surgical service treated 1.800 patients in the first year alone. To the Hospital, a popular Athenaeum for educational programs, lectures and art exhibitions, a library and a cinema were added, along with a park, and a Museum of the History of Medicine. On September 9th 1929, a three year High School for Nurses, hosting about 700 hundred pupils, the

School canteen and a kindergarden opened, together with a summer colony. Before long a service of Social Assistance was put in place, as well.(4) In the basement of a small building at the entrance to the hospital, a chapel existed where patients could pray. Later, in the 1943, a Church was built in the Hospital courtyard, too. Among the main founders of the Church, apart from the priest Constantin Sârbu, there were marshal Ion Antonescu and his wife, Maria.(10) Beside the Hospital Complex, "Her Royal Highness Princess Elena Charity Foundation" integrated sanatoriums for treating tuberculosis in weak, debilitated and poor children. They were established: one, near Suzana Monastery, on the Teleajean Valley, Prahova County - "St. Elena" Preventorium; another one at Brebu and Mâneciu-Ungureni, which bears now his name ("Dr. Gomoiu" Preventorium); some others at Șanțuri and Baba Runca - Brașov County, and in Mangalia, at the seaside.(12) More than that, along with the Romanian Society of Medical Climatology and Hydrology, presided by General dr. Nicolae Vicol, he intended to develop tourism on the picturesque Teleajean Valley. In his turn Gomoiu was honorary member of this *Society*, dr. Vicol had founded on May 1st, 1922.

"The Vergului Barrier" Hospital was soon cited as a model institution by the Sanitary Department of the League of Nations in Geneva. For his remarkable medical achievements, in 1928 Gomoiu was awarded the "Sanitary Merit" Order, first class. The same year, this brave "soldier" of national medicine received the "Crown of Romania" Order, third class, grade of Commander.

It was also within these "HRH Princess Elena" Establishments that *The Royal Romanian Society for the History of Medicine, Pharmacy, Veterinary Art, and Folklore* had its headquarters. Created on September 14th, 1929, it held its first meetings in the Vergului Establishments, indeed. Beside medical historical

activities, these institutions were meant to teach people of this neighbourhood hygiene and sanitary rules, make them understand and love music, literature, arts. They were periodically invited to participate in such events, even without paying any fees. Gomoiu and other outstanding intellectuals gave conferences there, aimed at emancipating common people through culture, knowledge, morality. Sanitary education held a privileged place, and focused on the fight against alcoholism, tobacco dependence, tuberculosis, pellagra, malaria, various infectious or job related diseases, sexually transmitted illnesses, childcare, hypnosis.

Unfortunately these Charity Establishments were not only nationalized in 1948, but the whole medical, social and cultural institution was destroyed. Gomoiu was initially asked to set up a Museum of History of Medicine, that he endowed with invaluable objects and printings related to medicine in Romania. Yet, all of a sudden, the government countermanded everything. Rare and precious artefacts, patrimonial objects, books and documents disappeared, brutally replaced by a school of communist political education. Gomoiu could never retrieve anything. His calvary began. In his *Memories*, he reported this tragic moment, when much of his whole life's work was completely ruined [8, 9].

The more so that, as an idealistic character, he had invested his own money and energy in raising these Establishments. If at the beginning this complex institution was known as "HRH Princess Elena Establishments", in 1948, under the communist commandments, Gomoiu changed its name into "St. Elena" Hospital and Foundation. Then the neighbourhood's name changed from *Vergului* Barrier into the "Labour Place" (Piața Muncii), while Princess Elena Establishment turned into "The 23rd of August" Hospital (August 23rd, 1940 was the date when Romania joined the Allies, starting to fight against Nazi Germany; it was Romania's National Day between 1948-1989). After 1990 instead, the *Vergului* Barrier Hospital was given "Dr. Victor Gomoiu" name. Clinics were entirely updated and enlarged, and reinaugurated in 2018. Today it is a quite modern Clinical Pediatric Hospital in Bucharest.

VIII. A prominent historian of medicine. Victor Gomoiu was a member of the leading team of the Society of Medical Students in Bucharest and of the Editorial Board of "The Hospital" review ["Spitalul"], this association edited. He wrote a detailed "History of the Society of Medical Students (1875-1906)" (332 pages), which was awarded the "Ion Jianu" prize in June 1906. Many other volumes followed: among them - the "History of «The Hospital» Journal and its table of contents in the first 50 years - 1881-1930" (1935), "History of the medical press in Romania - 1844-1936" (1936), "Centenary of the Brancovenesc Hospital" (1937), "Directory of doctors, pharmacists, veterinarians from the Romanian Lands" (1938), "Supplement to the first volume of the "Directory of doctors, pharmacists, veterinarians from the Romanian Lands" (1941), all exhaustive books of about 450-750 pages, with impressive bibliographical references [10].

The Royal Romanian Society for the History of Medicine, Pharmacy, Veterinary Art, and Folklore. On September 4th 1929, Victor Gomoiu created the *Royal Romanian Society for the History of Medicine, Pharmacy, Veterinary Art and Folklore (RSHM)*, which was soon affiliated to the International Society for the History of Medicine (ISHM), born in Paris in July 1920. Gomoiu was its general secretary, and in 1936, he became its honorary president. The first president of this Society

was also a noteworthy surgeon: professor Constantin Dimitrescu Severeanu. For Gomoiu, Severeanu embodied the very history of modern Romanian medicine and medical education. Until 1948, the other presidents were: Ion Cantacuzino, Nicolae Vicol, Mihail Manicatide and Dumitru Paulian. In 1955 the Society was incorporated into the Society of Medical Sciences and only later regained its autonomy. It was Professor Valeriu L. Bologa who followed after 1960.

Gomoiu's Activity within the International Society for the History of Medicine. ISHM was founded in Paris in 1920, by Jean-Joseph Tricot-Royer, a Belgian doctor trained in the French capital. In 1926, dr. Victor Gomoiu began his fruitful collaboration with the ISHM, that had its headquarters in Paris, by sending to its officers – more precisely to Maxime Laignel-Lavastine, a famous French medical historian –, his first book "On the history of medicine and medical education in Romania" (1206 pages) (1923). His work, presented in one of the meetings of the French Society for the History of Medicine, had a huge echo and Gomoiu was invited to participate in the ISHM Congress the following year. Concurrently he was unanimously elected member of the ISHM. Indeed, in 1927, in the Netherlands (Leyda-Amsterdam), he gave a presentation on "The first traces of medicine in Romania" which was enthusiastically welcomed, as well. Due to Gomoiu, Romania, an Eastern European country, was eventually integrated to the ISHM and was the first one to do it!

In 1928 Victor Gomoiu communicated some "Considerations on the Romanian Medical Folklore" at the VIIth International Congress on the History of Medicine in Oslo. Later, in 1930, in Rome, he invited ISHM to hold its IXth Congress in Bucharest, from September 10th to 18th, 1932. Gomoiu's initiative was praised and promoted by Nicolae Iorga, Mircea Eliade, Ion Cantacuzino, but boycotted by many colleagues from the Faculty. Fortunately, the Congress was going to be "especially successful thanks to the efforts of its organizers. It dealt particularly with the medical revolution in medicine in Balkan countries and the protection of Europe against the plague" – dr. Franz-André Sondervorst remembered [11]. The Congress was held under the high patronage of King Carol II, whereas Gomoiu was Congress president, and Cantacuzino, RSHM president. Post stamps, other "stickers" and a Golden Medal were minted on that occasion. (Fig.5) Subsequently, in 1933, ISHM elected Gomoiu as vice-president, and, on February 1st, 1936, ISHM president. At that moment he became honorary president of the Romanian Society for the History of Medicine. The newly appointed ISHM president "thought that the time was ripe, for our society, to have its own journal, so as to enable the members «to obtain more widespread information on the inside activities of the Society faster». From then on, Doctor Gomoiu began to publish in Bucharest the *Archives internationales d'histoire de la médecine*. These *Archives*, now almost impossible to find, are very precious for today they give us further information about the activities of the International Society during the years preceding the Second World War. They include the statutes and regulations of the Society, substantial reports on the meetings of the permanent Committee and a list of the papers given at the first eight congresses, apart from the seventh one. In addition, these archives contain important bio-bibliographical articles, pertaining to the older leaders of our Society. Today, these are important works of reference, relating to Tricot-Royer, Giordano, Jeanselme, Gomoiu, De Lint, Von Gyory, Sudhoff,

Singer, Newburger, Capparoni, Boulangerdause, Fernandez De Alcade and Vallée. This is important documentation, *entirely in the handwriting of our late lamented president, which will remain living testimony of his devotion to our Society*". (our emphasis) [11]. The "ISHM Archives" appeared from 1936 to 1939. In fact, during Gomoiu's ISHM presidency many historians of medicine known worldwide were still alive, actively involved in medical historical research and served as ISHM vice-presidents: Pietro Capparoni (Rome), Paul Diepgen (Leipzig / Berlin), Maxime Laignel-Lavastine (Paris), Charles Singer (London), while the general secretary was Jules Guiart, the French parasitologist from Lyon, friend to both Emil Racoviță and Ion Cantacuzino, who, after the Great Union, between 1921–1930 taught the history of medicine at the

Faculty of Medicine of the Romanian University of Cluj, working with another outstanding Romanian scientist, dr. Valeriu Lucian Bologa. In Cluj Guiart laid the basis of a university chair, and a famous Institute for the History of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Medical Folklore, endowed with an impressive Library and Museum. Guiart was part of the French Academic Mission to Romania, aimed at consolidating the country's unity after WWI.

Dr. Gomoiu developed friendly relationships with Balkan countries and their representatives to the ISHM. He devoted medical historical studies to Balkan traditional medicine, since archaic ethnomedicine survived longer in this part of the world and peoples shared related elements and mentality patterns.



Fig. 5. a. Stamps the Romanian Post edited on the occasion of the IXth International Congress of the History of Medicine held in Bucharest in September 10-18, 1932

In 1932, during the IX-th ISHM Congress in Bucharest he envisaged the foundation of the «Center for Medical-Ethnographic Studies in South-Eastern Europe». One of Gomoiu's supporters for this initiative was professor Cantacuzino, member of the Romanian Academy, world-famed bacteriologist. Gomoiu's open attitude towards the Balkan area and support for further development of medical historical

studies in this region earned him the titles of honorary member of the Greek Society for the History of Medicine (Athens, 1932), honorary member of the Association of the Serbian, Croatian and Slovene Physicians (Zagreb, 1933), member of the «Hippocrates» Society in Belgrad (1939); honorary member of the Turkish Society for the History of Medicine (Istanbul, 1940).



Fig. 5. b. Bucharest. The IXth International Congress on the History of Medicine (1932). Opening ceremony in the presence of King Carol II of Romania (left), Jean-Joseph Tricot-Royer, ISHM president (right, standing), and Victor Gomoiu, Congress president (right, at the back, standing); b. reception of participants at the Patriarchy; d. dr. Gomoiu (left) receiving a *honoris causa* distinction at Alcalá de Henares University (Spain, 1935)

He received the Polish Order of the "Golden Crown for Merit" (1928), and the title of Commander of the "Crown of Italy", as well. Indeed, Victor Gomoiu was an active, corresponding or honorary member of about 30 scientific societies, science and medical academies in France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Great Britain, Germany, Argentina, Peru, apart from those in the Balkan countries. He received the deserved recognition for his scientific contribution to the development of the history of

medicine from renowned scholars: Jean-Joseph Tricot-Royer, Maxime Laignel-Lavastine, Davide Giordano, Jules Guiart, Arturo Castiglioni, Pietro Capparoni, Adalberto Pazzini, Walter Artelt, Tadeusz Bilikiewicz, Paul Diepgen, Cesar Rodriguez Esposito, Aldo Mieli, Paraschiv Stoianoff, Karl Sudhoff, Henry E. Sigerist, Ahmet Süheyl, Lujo Thaller, Ernest Wickersheimer, Erik Walter, L. Zembrzuski, and many others [5, 9].

Part of these extremely valuable coworkers of Gomoiu, on Gomoiu's intervention were awarded the "Sanitary Merit" Order, first class, and became honorary RSHM members. Gomoiu's fruitful activity explains why from 1936 to 1946, he remained ISHM president. No elections took place in 1940 because of the war. However, in his absence, in 1952, 1954, and 1956, he was unanimously appointed ISHM *honorary president*, until his death. Apart from professional recognition, it was probably also a token of academic solidarity with Gomoiu's unbelievable sacrifice under the communist regime, when he still attempted to maintain his collaboration with both the ISHM and the International Academy of the History of Sciences (IAHS), founded in Paris in 1928. This involvement in intellectual projects was the life raft he hoped for, but which, hélas, slowly sank into trouble. Victor Gomoiu's enthusiastic and constant interest for accurate medical historical investigations revealed his complex personality, eager to limit dilettantism and improve ISHM functional structures, to update, diversify and strengthen its research and publishing activity.

Indeed, in the meantime Gomoiu got equally involved in the activity of the *International Academy of the History of Sciences (IAHS)* where he was a close coworker of professor Petre Sergescu, a prominent Romanian mathematician and historian of science, IAHS president and perpetual secretary, and another well known son of the Mehedinți county. From April 11th to 16th, 1936, the IAHS VIII-th Meeting (1st IAHS Extraordinary International Meeting or «Little Congress») took place in Cluj and Bucharest, organized by the IAHS Romanian Group (the National Romanian Group adherent to the Academy) (cf. *Archeion*, 18 [1936], 204-226). On that occasion the RSHM held a solemn session in Bucharest on April 15th, 1936, where famed scientists participated. Gomoiu tried in fact to develop history of science as a whole in Romania, yielding a general and complementary background to history of medicine itself. To this aim he intended to collaborate e.g. with professors Dumitru Mangeron and Alexandru Climescu, celebrated mathematicians in Iași [9].

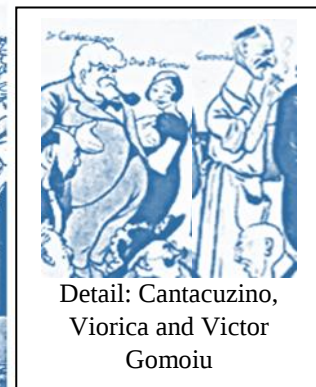


Fig.5.e. Caricature of the participants in the IX-th ISHM Congress held in Bucharest, September, 10th-18th, 1932

In 1940, Gomoiu received the "Crown of Romania" Order, first class, in the grade of High Cross, and in 1947, he accepted to be a member of the Directory Board of the History of Science Society in Paris.

IX. A patriot and a martyr. Political entanglements. It is undoubtedly obvious that Greater Romania, formed on December 1st, 1918, went through a highly critical period, immediately after. Thus, the "national problem" became a real challenge for most Romanian intellectuals sincerely attached to the preservation and further development of their own national identity, language, religion, culture. Furthermore, in the interwar period, equally due to the international context, Romanian citizenship had to be awarded to allogeneic ethnic groups from Romania, Hebrews included, in very formal and much too simplified conditions. Considering that these "foreigners", sometimes also "traitors", along with other "profiteers of war" were quite numerous in various regions of the country, many controversies arose and a resistance movement developed in the 1920s. This was particularly true for medical students. Those in Bucharest were among the most radical ones. They joined their teachers and other intellectuals

in supporting this combat. As Gomoiu mentioned in his "Memories", in 1923, these movements of vigilantes took on an antisemitic character. According to Gomoiu, students were mere victims of politicians that manipulated them without even intending or being able to resolve their huge basic social and economic problems [4]. Gomoiu, a former member and leader of the Medical Students' Society in Bucharest, defended and helped them, explaining this painful situation in his "Memories". Generally, interwar Romanian intellectuals were right-wing persons, in terms of political classification. So was Gomoiu. Yet, due to his moral integrity and resistance to compromise, which was a behavioural feature in his attitude, in December 1918 Gomoiu had the audacity of refusing to mystify the necropsy results of several victims of the dramatic typographers' strike in Bucharest [4]. He constantly refused to adhere to the Liberal party although he was either invited or almost forced to do so. He tried to stay away from politics, but in 1923-1924, for a short lapse of time, he accepted the membership of Nicolae Iorga's Democratic Nationalist Party, which in 1924 merged with Constantin Argetoianu's People's Party. Gomoiu was even appointed honorary president of the

Party's Mehedinți section. But, deeply disillusioned, he stopped collaborating with both the "Romanian Nation" [*Neamul Românesc*] newspaper and the Party. In 1924, together with Titus Enacovici, he founded "The Word" [*Cuvântul*] newspaper, where he published several articles [4]. Disgusted by political plots and interests, unable to be part of any "bargains", Gomoiu resigned. Under the pressure of such political interconditioning effects, no wonder that in 1934 he was imprisoned for a short lapse of time – about three weeks, from March 23rd to April 15th – after the Romanian Prime Minister I. G. Duca's assassination in December 1933 by "The Iron Guard" fascist movement, when several suspects, important names of Romanian political, scientific and cultural life, were put into jail: Nae Ionescu, Nichifor Crainic, Grigore Forțu. [12,13]. Dr. Victor Gomoiu was among them, suspected or rather deliberately accused of "anti-carlism" [actions against King Carol II]. Once their innocence was proven, they were released. Some manifestos were found at Dr. D. Gerota's house, but he was forgotten or forgiven.

In 1940, Gomoiu became Minister of Health for about three months, from July 4th to September 14th. Unfortunately, considered an inconvenient character he was dismissed by the National Legionary government instituted in Romania on September 6th, 1940, and overthrown on January 23rd, 1941. Similar things happened in 1941, when he stood in front of the Martial Court for having revealed the toxic effects of *Prontosyl* – an antibacterial drug of the sulfonamide group – abusively given to soldiers. It caused both hepatic and renal injuries. But Gomoiu's attitude was thought to potentially "denigrate the army".

Antifascist resistance. In 1942, Dr. Victor Gomoiu informed Queen Mother Elena [Princess Mother Elena] about the scheduled deportations to Transnistria of a new group of Jews and how miserable their condition was. Some of them were thus saved. Seemingly, Barbu Lăzăreanu (Lazarovici) (1881-1957), a Romanian Jewish literary historian and publicist, member of the Romanian Academy, informed his friend, Dr. Gomoiu, about this and was himself finally helped and rescued due to Gomoiu's intervention with the Royal Family. (14) He was in fact Queen Elena's personal physician. For her efficient effort in saving Jews' lives due to her influence on her son, King Michael, Queen Mother Elena was conferred the title of "Righteous among Nations" by the Yad Vashem memorial commission in 1993, March 11th. After WWII, opposing psychological pressure and ostracization, Gomoiu maintained correspondence with former friends and coworkers from many countries: Tricot-Royer, Giordano, Siegerist, Castiglioni, Diepgen, Pazzini, Guiart, Verhoeven, Sergescu etc. Since letters were censored, they were sent under disguised names, details were unvoiced or subtly suggested. Western correspondents had a faint idea about what happened beyond the iron curtain. Instead when addressing colleagues from the communist camp, e.g., Bulgaria or Yugoslavia, Gomoiu's language turned into a more sympathetic and direct one, since they were experiencing a similar tragedy [9, 15].

"Knight of the Sad Figure". In 1945-1946, Gomoiu took part in debates regarding the foundation of a social-Christian party, able to fight against communism. In fact, by

April 1944-July 1945, he elaborated the Statute of The National Union Party [*Partidul Uniunii Naționale*], meant to find the best and moral solutions for the country's progress, where, at that time, according to Gomoiu, the "wind of anarchisation blew, called wind of democratisation". Accused of "conspirational meetings and illegal possession of weapons", he was put on trial at Court-Martial in 1945, but immediately released for lack of evidence. (8) Undeniably, Gomoiu opposed any serious collaboration with the new political institutions, despite the fact that he tried to be polite and reconcile with fate. He constantly refused to «enroll» and cooperate with the communist government, deny his friends, and formally recognize the new political order. He tried to maintain his correspondence with foreign scientists and friends, even though messages were delayed or sometimes "lost". Besides he was very close to the Royal Family. As he did quite often in his life, Gomoiu assumed martyrdom once again.

X. An intransigent character, his sad end and revival. After World War II, Victor Gomoiu was openly confronted with the Romanian communist experience, that entrained: nationalisation of his goods and of the "Vergului" Hospital (1948); loss of social position and prestige, along with social marginalization; dismantlement of the Museum of History of Medicine he created in Bucharest; destruction of personal archives and letters; imprisonment for almost five years (May 1950–September 1954), when he was already 68 year old. More than that: in July 1951, while still in prison, he was appointed physician in chief of the surgical section at the "Bucur" Hospital in Bucharest. (9) Gomoiu, son to a priest, was member of the Vergului Parish Council (*Călărași Park Parish*). Besides, he was very close to the Royal Family. His constant moral and intransigent attitude, his "rational sensibility" regarding the Church and its role in the birth and flourishing of the healthcare system, his royalist option and continuous correspondence with world-reputed scientists from about 50 countries, transformed him into a suspect for the communist rulers who allegedly accused him of "undermining the new state order" in Romania. [9,10]. This was probably the main reason why Gomoiu was so terribly punished: on May 6th, 1950 he was arrested as the real founder of the "Princess Elena Establishments", which was not completely true. Nonetheless, most payments assuring the management of this institution had been done by Gomoiu alone, even though whenever possible the Royal Princess paid him back later. For about four and a half years he remained in jail at Sighet, without any trial or official motivation [9]. Released on September 14th, 1954, his health status continued to worsen. He never completely recovered afterwards. In his daily memories, on Tuesday, November 12th, 1957, Dudu Velicu, a Church chronicler, mentioned that "Dr. V. Gomoiu refused the quality of member of the Academy that was offered to him, for his merits, being also the president of the International Association for the History of Medicine. He also refused the position of university professor, which he gave up a long time ago, following the conflict he had with Dr. Univ. Prof. Toma Ionescu. But he asked to be given his pension. And he is given 1200 lei a month." (16) Following several agonizing years, Gomoiu died in Bucharest, on February 6th, 1960.

Homage of the ISHM. A homage was paid to dr. Victor Gomoiu by noteworthy Romanian personalities in 1932, on his 50th anniversary, and a tribute volume was edited. Unexpectedly perhaps, he was honoured on his death, too, when in February 1960, among many others, ISHM vice-president, professor Franz-André Sondervorst (1909-1986) from Belgium, a close coworker of professor J.-J. Tricot-Royer and dr. Gomoiu himself, defined him as “one of the most beautiful figures in medicine”. Once more dr. Sondervorst expressed his high esteem for Gomoiu’s endeavour and good results as ISHM president in the speech he gave at the XXII-nd ISHM Congress, organised in Bucharest and Constanța in 1970 under the presidency of professor Valeriu L. Bologa, Gomoiu’s successor as a leading figure in Romanian medical history, a personality who much better understood the sense of compromise and advised also Gomoiu to do the same [9, 15].

Posthumous recognition. Dr. Gomoiu’s notorius work was reconsidered and posthumously enjoyed overall recognition. In 1969, the *Romanian Society for the History of Medicine* founded by him celebrated its 40th anniversary and a medal was minted on that occasion, bearing Gomoiu’s profile on one side and that of Asklepios on the other. (Fig.5) In 1970, the ISHM

Congress that took place in Romania for the second time outlined Gomoiu’s contribution, who first had organised a similar event in Bucharest in 1932. Professor Sondervorst reminded the participants “the all-important part[Gomoiu] would play in creating and publishing the *Archives of the Society*. As President, he was extraordinarily stimulating. Tall, elegant, gentle, outspoken and lively in speech, he was most cordial in his dealings. All had great respect for him and this was deserved, **for it was under his presidency that our Society experienced its finest progress**”. (our emphasis) [11].

The Romanian Society for the History of Medicine held periodical sessions dedicated to Victor Gomoiu and Pompei Samarian. In 1972, in Craiova a symposium was held, commemorating Gomoiu’s 90th birth anniversary. It was then that dr. Viorica Ionescu-Gomoiu, dr. Gomoiu’s second wife, close and dedicated coworker, donated precious collections for the “Victor Gomoiu” Museum that professor dr. Mihail Șcheau established in Craiova, tightly connected with the Faculty of Medicine and the University of the city. Unfortunately, soon after 1990 it was dismantled and only in Târgu-Jiu it could find a new place eventually.



Fig.6. Medal celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Romanian Society for the History of Medicine foundation: Bucharest, September 14th, 1929-1969: a. Asklepios (obverse); b. Dr. Victor Gomoiu (reverse)

In 2010 the Romanian Society for the History of Medicine and the Romanian Society of Surgery conjointly organised in Constanța their Meeting and Congress, respectively. Professor dr. Vasile Sârbu, president of the Romanian Society of Surgery at that time, was in charge of both scientific events. The RSHM Meeting was dedicated to Thoma Ionescu and Victor Gomoiu. (Fig.7)



Fig. 7. Ionescu-Gomoiu Medal, Constanța, 2010. a. obverse: 150 years since the birth of Thoma Ionescu (1860-1926); 50 years since the death of Victor Gomoiu (1882-1960); b. reverse: the emblem of the RSHM, Gomoiu founded in 1929.

ISHM president, prof. dr. Giorgio Zanchin (Italy), and other outstanding ISHM representatives from Greece, Belgium, Italy, France, Turkey, attended the conference invited by professor dr. Dana Baran, ISHM general secretary, along with the local Congress organising committee presided by prof. dr. Vasile Sârbu, and RSHM president, prof. dr. Nicolae Marcu. Among ISHM participants there was professor dr. Jean-Pierre Tricot, grandson to professor dr. Jean-Joseph Tricot-Royer, ISHM founding member and first president, but equally one of Gomoiu’s closest friends.

Professor J.-P. Tricot, former ISHM president himself, gave an interesting lecture on Victor Gomoiu, too, and offered the ISHM general secretary some original letters Gomoiu had sent to his grandfather years ago. Soon after, professor dr. Sârbu founded and started to publish in Constanța a short lived periodical titled “*Victor Gomoiu*” *Romanian Journal for the History of Medicine*.

Conclusions.

Political interferences and strait commandments of his civic consciousness revealed that dr. Gomoiu was a too hot to handle man. To Gomoiu «moral death seemed more serious than physical decay». He obstinately refused to metamorphose into a «new man». Intelligent and sensitive, proud and extremely rigorous, he often preferred marginalisation rather than to be ignored or disregarded. Committed to justice and truth, Gomoiu sacrificed his life for his ideals accomplishing a dramatic destiny that “couldn't always be a bed of roses”, as his Memories testify and confess. Nevertheless, Gomoiu succeeded to prove his erudition, tenacity and educated natural gifts, his multiple talents, not only in the field of medicine and surgery, but in the domain of the history of medicine, as well. Owing to his thoroughly documented books, he contributed to the development of Romanian medical history, as a true founding personality. Furthermore, he established the Royal Romanian Society for the History of Medicine and brilliantly integrated it into the international medical historical movement of his epoch. The Romanian Society for the History of Medicine celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2019 and continues to be active within the ISHM and other international forums, trying to maintain and carry on its tradition. As to ISHM, dr. Gomoiu proved to be a dynamic and inspired leader, capable of expanding this association of both professionals and amateurs, particularly towards Eastern European and Balkan countries, where national societies for the history of medicine began to emerge and ISHM congresses to be held. The relationship with the IAHS was another delicate problem, because History of Medicine always aimed at enjoying a certain autonomy in its specific topics and debates.

If for Gomoiu the question was to do or not to do compromises, for our contemporaries the question remains whether medical humanities should or should not seriously attract attention and promote complex paradigms.

Conflict of Interest

Author has no conflict of interest to disclose

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